



Nathaniel Hawthorne THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES

***The House of the Seven Gables***  
 by Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864)



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“The wrongdoing of one generation lives into the successive ones and... becomes a pure and uncontrollable mischief.” Hawthorne’s classic novel tells the story of the fortunes of the Pyncheon family. An ancestor wrested away the land of a man convicted at the Salem Witch Trials, but before his death the man cursed the Pyncheon family until such time as they should make restitution. Now, almost two centuries later, the family is in real distress. Hepzibah, an old maid and resident of the house, is forced by advanced poverty to open a shop. Her brother Clifford, just released from prison after serving a thirty-year sentence for murder, struggles to maintain a hold on reality. Cousin Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon is making himself odious by threatening to have Clifford committed to an institution. And after all these years, the deed to a vast tract of land, that would settle great wealth on the family, is still missing.

One bright ray of sunshine enters the house when cousin Phoebe arrives for an extended stay to allow unhappy matters in her end of the family to sort themselves out. While she lightens the lives of Hepzibah and Clifford, she also attracts the attention of a mysterious lodger named Holgrave, who has placed himself near the Pyncheon family for reasons that only come clear at the end of the story. The crisis arrives when the Judge, who strongly resembles the Colonel Pyncheon who built the house so many years ago, steps up his demands on Hepzibah and Clifford and unwittingly triggers the curse. *(Summary by Mark F. Smith)*

**Total running time: 12:20:25**  
**Read by Mark F. Smith**

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